



House Built By William Ewing, at Ewington, Ohio, 1812.



ENOCH EWING, 1799-1885.

V.A.-O.-MICH.

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XI.

CAPTAIN JAMES EWING.

The Ewing family of Pocahontas County and vicinity was founded by James Ewing, born near Londonderry, Ireland, of Scotch parents, about 1720. He came to Virginia as a young man, and there married Margaret Sargent, of Irish birth, who bore him five children: Jennie, who married Clendennin, Susan who married Moses Moore, Elizabeth who married George Dougherty, John, and William. John was born in 1747. At the time of the Clendenin massacre in Greenbrier County, John, a mere lad, was taken prisoner by the Indians, and carried into the Ohio country. There he was adopted into an Indian tribe, baptized according to Indian custom, and given an Indian name. But John's Scotch-Irish blood was not easily converted to Indian, and when a returning party of warriors brought back as a curiosity an English Bible, he explained to them that it was the word of God. The Indians asked whether his God was an Indian or a white man, and when John answered that he was a white man, they would no longer listen to his reading the book.

John learned the Indian tongue, but he never loved the Indian. In his old age, at the mention of the word "Indian in his presence he would always say, "Curse and confound the Indian." He was released from captivity under a treaty with the Indians, probably in 1764, and delivered to the whites at Fort Pitt, from which point he made his way back to his old Virginia home. In 1774 he married Ann Smith, Irish. They had eleven children, namely: William, 1775-1858; Susannah Holcomb, 1766-; Hon. John Smith Ewing, 1778-1837; Janeat Howell, 1781-1855; Sarah Holcomb, 1782-1850; Ann Ewing, 1785-; Andrew, 1787-1868; Elizabeth; Nancy Mills, 1781-; Lydia Burris 1792-1872; Samuel, 1797-1855. The children of these gave John a list of grand children numbering sixty-five. In 1801, John emigrated from Pocahontas and located in Gallia County, Ohio, where he died in 1825. Of his family, his son William alone remained in Virginia, occupying lands on Stony Creek until the time of his death. John Smith Ewing represented his district in the Virginia Assembly in about 1812. Anselm T. Holcomb, son of Sarah, was a member of the Ohio Legislature. John Ewing, son of Andrew, and George Burris, son of Lydia, were members of the Missouri Legislature. Andrew, son of John S., was a member of the California Legislature.

John's living descendants are legion. They may be found in nearly every western state, and counted among the successful farmers, business men, and professional men of the country. Among them are John Ewing, lawyer, Grant City, Mo., Clay Ewing, York-

town, Kan., Jennie Sprouse, M. D. Greenview, Ill., M. Howell Finnegan- New London, Mo., P. H. Holcomb, lawyer, Butler, Mo., S. C. Holcomb, lawyer, Yates Centre, Kan., A. T. Holcomb, Portsmouth, O., William Whitman, county clerk, Van West, O., S. G. Burnside, merchant, Kansas City, Mo., Sumner Ewing, teacher and author, Springfield, O., Mrs Homer McCray, Kendallville, Ind., Laura Dunning, Ingomar California.

The descendants of John Ewing reverently refer to him as "Indian John."

William Ewing, brother of "Indian John," was born in 1756. In 1774 he joined Arbuckle's company of militia, and pursued Chief Cornstalk and his braves to the Ohio River, where he participated in the famous battle of Point Pleasant. Here he was in the thickest of the fight, but came out without a scratch, narrowly escaping instant death. He had availed himself of the shelter of a sapling while firing at the redskins, when an excited comrade rushed up to the place pushing him from his shelter and occupying it himself. William was scarcely out of the way before his comrade was struck in the head by an Indian bullet and killed instantly. In after years he related that every time he took deliberate aim at an Indian in that battle his rifle flashed in the pan, and his Indian got away, but when he fired at random his gun never missed fire. If he killed an Indian he never knew it, but he tried his level best to avenge the capture of his sister Mrs Clendennin and his brother John.

In 1785 he married Mary McNeil, sister of Gabriel

McNeil, and daughter of Thomas McNeil. He settled on Swago Creek, near Buckeye; and was popularly known as "Swago Bill." It is said that he blazed a line of trees around the lands he selected, and afterwards had the tract patented. Once he was plowing when the alarm came that the Indians were preparing to attack the settlement. The shelter of the nearest fort was sought, but the Indians did not appear. After a few days of quiet, William ventured out to the farm, where he found everything about as he had left them, except that a brood of quails which had been hatched and mothered by a chicken had disappeared. On his return to the fort he shouldered his plow, thinking to hide it from the Indians in the woods. While proceeding through the woods he suddenly heard "thump, thump, thump," followed by "click, click, click," and turning to one side he saw three Indians behind a large log with their guns pointed at him. They had tried to shoot, but their powder was damp, and the guns had missed fire. William dropped his plow and started for the fort as fast as he could run, with the Indians after him. Going over a hill and into a gully, he suddenly changed his course, ran up the ravine a short distance and stopped, and shortly had the pleasure of seeing his pursuers trot by in the regular course. Ewing made his way to the fort in safety.

William and Mary Ewing were the parents of twelve children, all born on the Swago, near Buckeye, namely: Elizabeth Doddridge, 1787-1852; Thomas, 1788-1874; Jonathan, 1790-1850; William, 1792-; James, 1793-1824; John, 1795-; Sarah Wallace, 1797-1827;

Enoch, 1799-1885; Jacob, 1802-1878; Abram McNeel, 1804-1891; George, 1807-1883; Andrew, 1809-1885. The children of these gave William and Mary a list of grand children numbering eighty-one, twenty-two of whom are still living. In 1810 William and his family moved to Gallia County, Ohio, and the town of Ewington was named in their honor. Thomas served as Justice of the Peace for many years. Elizabeth, Thomas, William, James, John, Sarah, Abram, George, and Andrew lived and died in or near Gallia County. Jonathan and Jacob died in Hancock County, Ill., Enoch died in Hillsdale County, Mich., and Andrew died in Iowa. Mary McNeal Ewing, the mother, died in Mercer County, Mo., in 1858. Enoch Ewing and his family went to Michigan in 1853, and seven of his children are still living in that State, besides a host of grand children. William's descendants, like John's, are counted among the successful men of the country. Among them are Dr G. A. Ewing, Jackson, O.; Dr G. K. Ewing, Ewington, O.; Dr U. B. G. Ewing, Richmond, Ind.; Dr William Leonard, Fostoria, O.; Rev Thomas E. Peden, President Theological Seminary, Ayden, N. C.; Rev M. L. Peden, Temperance, Mich.; W. J. Aleshire, editor, Gibsonburg, O.; E. E. Aleshire, lawyer, Stanberry, Mo.; Levi Howell, civil engineer, Luray, Mo.; Frank P. McCarley, civil engineer, Pittsburg, Pa.; Hon. W. S. Matthews, President Insurance Company, Toledo, O., ex-member of the Ohio Legislature; E. B. Matthews, manufacturer, Jackson, O.; G. W. Ewing, Plymouth, Ill.; W. L. Ewing, Rutlege, Mo., J. K. Ewing, Port

Blakely, Wash.; John W., H. McK., James L., and Andrew A., of Camden, Mich.; E. C. White, White, Mich.; J. C. Jenkins, Cunningham, Kansas; Isaac Jenkins, White, Mich.; William H. Ewing, merchant, Camden, Mich.; I. E. Ewing, manufacturer, Reading, Mich.; W. J. Ewing, merchant, Kunkle, O.; Rev I. H. Ewing, Bristol, Ind.; J. C. Ewing, merchant, Pioneer, O.; L. P. Cravens, teacher, Lake City, Minn.; Ida M. Ewing, Pontoosuc, Ill.; A. L. Ewing, teacher, Wellston, O.; Smith H. Ewing, merchant, Frankfort, O.; John H. Ewing, county clerk, Gallipolis, O.; Rev Sadie P. Cooper, Detroit, Mich.; Prof. R. B. Ewing, Ewington, O.; Theresa Gilbert, Sioux Falls, South Dakotah.

The compiler is indebted to Hon. A. E. Ewing, of Grand Rapids, Mich., for most of the material contained in this sketch. He is a great-grandson of "Swago Bill," a grandson of Enoch, and a son of Henry McK. Ewing. His mother was a Miss Hank, of Monroe County. He is a lawyer, and a member of the House of Representatives of Michigan in 1893.

Captain James Ewing, the founder of these families, died probably about the year 1800. He was captain of a company of militia in Augusta County during the Revolutionary war, and tradition asserts that he received a large tract of land in consideration of his services. Tradition makes him the hero of more than one occasion. One of especial interest is told of how he captured an outlaw by the name of Shockley, who was a terror to the country, and who had stolen James'

rifle from ever his cabin door. His descendants have reached to the eighth generation, and numerically have reached into the thousands. His Highland Scotch instinct made him to prefer the mountains to the plains, and it is probable that in his mountain home, surrounded by the perils of pioneer life, beset on the one hand by wild animals, and on the other by savage Indians, he found life quite to his liking.

His wife, it is said, lived to be one hundred years old.